

PRESS RELEASE

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BANA Creates Braille Excellence Award

In honor of the 200th birthday of Louis Braille, The Braille Authority of North America (BANA) has created the *Braille Excellence Award*. This award will be given to people or organizations that have developed or contributed to a code, have developed code materials, or software that supports codes, and/or who represent the highest standards of braille production. The first award is being given to Dr. Abraham Nemeth for his contributions making math and science accessible for blind people around the world.

Abraham Nemeth was born completely blind in 1918, in New York City, where he spent most of his life. Although mathematics instantly became a passion for Nemeth, he was encouraged by his counselors to pursue a degree in psychology at Brooklyn College. Following his bachelor's degree, he continued his education at Columbia University, where he earned his master's in psychology, while attending evening classes in physics and mathematics. As the math courses became increasingly more difficult, Nemeth proceeded to develop his own system of braille mathematics, adopted in the U.S. in 1952, named the *Nemeth Braille Code for Mathematics and Science Notation*. Shortly after the development of his code, he joined the Department of Mathematics at the University of Detroit, where he created a system of communicating mathematical formulas, called MathSpeak. During this time Nemeth received a Ph.D in mathematics from Wayne State University. Abraham Nemeth's contributions have made math and science accessible for blind people around the world.

The *Braille Excellence Award* will be presented at the Spring BANA Board meeting to be held in conjunction with the California Transcribers and Educators of the Visually Handicapped (CTEVH) conference in March, 2009. The award will be presented at the CTEVH brunch on Sunday, March 15 at 10:00 a.m.

BANA will meet from March 15-17, 2009 at the San Francisco Airport Marriott Hotel. This meeting is being hosted by CTEVH, a BANA member organization, and overlaps with their annual conference.

The mission and purpose of the Braille Authority of North America are to assure literacy for tactile readers through the standardization of braille and/or tactile graphics. BANA promotes and facilitates the use, teaching and production of braille. It publishes rules, interprets and renders opinions pertaining to braille in all existing codes. It deals with codes now in existence or to be developed in the future, in collaboration with other countries using English braille. In exercising its function and authority, BANA considers the effects of its decisions on other existing braille codes and formats; the ease of production by various methods; and acceptability to readers.

For additional resource information, visit www.brailleauthority.org.